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INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 5534  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 2899  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5906  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 7973  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 003003

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [ENRG](#) [KDEM](#) [AF](#) [IR](#) [PK](#) [XD](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: INDIA RELUCTANT ON TALIBAN TALKS, CONSULTING  
AFGHANS ON ELECTION AID, WELCOMES USAID ENERGY PROJECT

REF: A. SECSTATE 108855

[1](#)B. NEW DELHI 02771

[1](#)C. NEW DELHI 02986

Classified By: POLCOUNS Ted Osius for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In a 24 November meeting with PolCouns, Indian Ministry of External Affairs Joint Secretary (Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran) T.C.A. Raghavan expressed his government's concern over ISAF members' willingness to engage the Taliban. Raghavan welcomed a USAID proposal for a Trilateral Energy Project and was optimistic that a more concrete plan would be developed for India's assistance to Afghan elections following the visit to Delhi of an Afghan election observation team this weekend. End Summary.

India Nervous About Afghans Officially Engaging Taliban

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[1](#)2. (C) Accompanied by USAID Deputy Director and PolOff, PolCouns met on 24 November with Ministry of External Affairs Joint Secretary (Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran) T.C.A. Raghavan to follow up on Ref A demarche, discuss recent developments in Raghvan's area of responsibility, and present a USAID proposal for a trilateral energy project to be conducted in India to train Afghan power sector officials. (Note: Comments on Pakistan and Iran are being reported septel. End Note.) According to Raghavan, the Government of India feels that some ISAF members' willingness to engage with the Taliban is a dangerous and unwise approach, and he added that the Government of Iran shares India's view on this issue. "In India and Iran there is much anxiety about these talks", Raghavan explained. However, Raghavan admitted that there is an increasing sense among many Afghans that engaging the Taliban is a necessary reality and does not symbolize defeatism, saying certain areas of Afghanistan find "hope" in dialogue with the Taliban.

Afghan Team to Observe Delhi Elections

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[1](#)3. (C) Following up on Ref A demarche concerning Indian contributions to Afghanistan's 2009 elections, PolCouns asked if the Indian government had put any more thought into how it could assist. While he did not have specifics for next year, Raghavan informed PolCouns that a team from the Afghan

Elections Commission would be visiting India on November 30 to observe state assembly elections in Delhi. The plan was then for the visiting Afghan observers to see what was needed to successfully run a large scale election, then to consider what they would want to request from the Indian government in terms of material/technical support. The Joint Secretary was hopeful that details regarding India's contribution to Afghan elections could be worked out during the team's visit.

#### Raghavan Welcomes Trilateral Energy Project

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¶4. (SBU) The Deputy Director of USAID briefed Raghavan on a proposed capacity building project for Afghanistan Power Sector Executives. The South Asia Regional Initiative for Energy (SARI/E) is proposing to formalize a tripartite partnership between Afghanistan, India, and the United States. The goal of this long term program is to accelerate the pace of power sector reforms in Afghanistan and to help build technical and managerial capacity in the planning and implementation of sectors, specifically in the area of power distribution management and reforms.

¶5. (SBU) Raghavan reacted positively to this proposal and welcomed USAID's efforts. Pointing to what he described as considerable Indian investments in the power sector in Afghanistan, and specifically mentioning the transmission line and the Salma dam hydroelectric project, Raghavan agreed that there should be capacity building programs alongside specific projects. In addition to the direct financial

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investments in energy projects, he explained, it is necessary to train the people who will be working as operations managers so that operation can begin immediately following the projects' completion. Raghavan expressed minor concern about the possibility of this project competing with GOI's existing programs and said this would easily be avoided if it was coordinated with GOI as planned.

¶6. (U) Both USAID Missions in Afghanistan and India have bilateral agreements with their respective counterpart Governments for supporting them in power sector executive training programs. Under this new tripartite agreement, India would host 250 Afghan training participants every year over the next 3 to 5 years, with technical support from USAID through SARI/E.

¶7. (U) A five-member Afghan team led by the Deputy Minister of Power and Energy will be visiting India 1-7 December with the hopes of setting the stage for discussing the modalities of the program and the proposed trilateral agreement.

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